

Quaestio Vexata: Collecting Arundel “Chromos” in America and Australasia

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Preamble

The Arundel Society (1848–1897), or Society for Promoting the Knowledge of Art, was one of the first entities to produce high-quality colour reproductions of works of art. Over its long life, the Arundel Society circulated colour lithographs of nearly 200 different works of art: *trecento* and *quattrocento* frescoes from northern and central Italy, as well as altarpieces by van Eyck, Memling and others. From its London base, print and text publications were distributed throughout Britain and its colonies, to Europe and North America. The Society gathered subscriptions via agents in Paris, Bonn, Dresden, Leipzig, Venice, Florence, Rome, Cape Town, Boston, New York, Montreal, Melbourne and Auckland.

From the beginning, the Society attracted new subscribers by publicising its membership: advertisements in the *Athenaeum* in 1849, the year after its formation, for example, list 407 subscribers—40 are women, 54 peers and 23 men of the church—a pattern which continued throughout its life.¹ The Society relied on close connections between its aristocratic members, politicians, religious leaders and the art world to attract and retain subscribers, as well as to promote its activities.

Subscribers paid an annual fee of one guinea (about \$200 in today’s terms) or could invest ten guineas for a lifetime subscription; several types of membership, including multiple subscriptions, were also offered. Subscription allowed for free delivery within three miles of the Society’s office in Bond St, London. Beyond this “all expenses of packing, booking, and conveyance of publications shall be paid by the Members or purchasers receiving such publications, except when forwarded in a Local Agent’s usual parcel” (Arundel Society, *General Rules* 8) The Society’s agents varied in number—from an original group of 13 listed in 1849, to a maximum of 22 in the 1860s—as well as the length of association and types of business. By 1855 the Society boasted 19 distributors throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland; a decade later it also had a further ten overseas.

The agents, in turn, adopted many of the Society’s strategies to attract subscribers. By the mid-1860s, when membership had grown to more than 1,900, the Society’s 35 institutional subscribers included places as diverse as the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in St Petersburg, the Parliamentary Library in Quebec, and Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy’s School of Art in Bombay. In 1865 a founder member would have owned 43 large chromolithographs,

¹ Subscription dates are taken from six main published sources: information for 1849 is from the *Athenaeum* July, August and September advertisements; that for 1850 is from the first Annual report; for 1855 from the list of members within the *Descriptive Notice of the Drawings, Tracings, Models and Miscellaneous Publications of the Arundel Society Exhibited November 1855, in the Crystal Palace, Sydenham*; for 1858 from the *Report, Letter from the Secretary, List of the Annual Publications, List of Members*; and the 1860 list is from the (newly revised) General rules. The remaining information is drawn from the Society’s printed subscriber lists for 1866, 1867, 1868, 1869, 1871, 1872, 1878, 1879, 1881 and 1883.

38 wood engravings after Giotto's frescoes from the Arena Chapel, Padua, as well as numerous engravings and pamphlets. It is estimated the Society produced a total of 200,000 sheets over five decades.

Some of the Arundel Society's agents, like the organisation itself, demonstrated remarkable continuity. The Oxford print seller John Ryman, in High Street, is listed in 1849 and his firm continued as an agent until at least 1895, accounting in part for the large number of prints recorded in the city. Various university organisations subscribed, including the Oxford University Union Society, the Common Room at Cuddesdon College, and Worcester College. Influential professors and tutors at Oxford encouraged the study of art and, thus gaining the admiration of influential critics and art historians such as John Ruskin (1819–1900) and Walter Pater (1839–1894). Ruskin's tutor H. G. Liddell was an early member of the Society and, while his time on its Council was brief, he retained his membership until the end. Pater's tutor William Wolfe Capes was also a member from 1855 until at least 1883. The writer Oscar Wilde, who was at Oxford from 1874 to 1878 and owned a large collection of Arundel Society works, may have acquired his prints there.



Fig 1. The Ruskin Museum at Meersbrook House c.1895–1910, glass plate negatives

Collection of the Guild of St George, Museums Sheffield: John Wharltun Bunney's *Western façade of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice* 1877–82 and a group of Arundel Society chromolithographs is on the right-hand wall.

The effect of the prints acquired by colleges, academics and students was notable. Ruskin—who was also on the Council, although his involvement varied enormously over time—wrote several texts for the Society and oversaw some of its copying work. He would have received a complete set of the Society's prints via his subscription and, it seems, owned multiple copies of particular subjects, some of which eventually found their way to the drawing school set up by him at Oxford or to the St George's Museum in Sheffield (figure 1). Pater's rooms at Oxford,

with Eastern carpet and bright chintz curtains—and “three or four line engravings that served to remind him of the noble originals” rather than represent them—were described as being in sharp contrast to the other dons’ “oaken respectability and heaviness” (Humphry Ward quoted by Benson 18). Indeed the vividness of Pater’s commentary on Botticelli’s *Venus rising from the sea* and other works suggests he may have composed his texts with the Botticelli chromolithographs in sight. In August 1882 the author Vernon Lee, staying with Pater and his sisters in Oxford, wrote to her mother of “a sweet little room at the top of the house with Arundels of Luini and Francias” (quoted by Ledger 157).

The proliferation of Arundel Society chromolithographs at Oxford, and discussion of them, suggests the various intellectual, cultural and social connections between members. The Society promoted its artist members, particularly the Royal Academicians: George Richmond (1809–1896), William Holman Hunt (1827–1910) and Edward Poynter (1836–1919), amongst others, were involved with the Society and its management over an extended period, and are often mentioned in Annual reports and other publications. Hunt’s period on the Council from 1858 to 1868 may have informed his savvy financial decisions about the publication of his painting *The light of the world* 1853–54. Issued in 1860, the engraving was described in the *Illustrated London News* as “one of the most perfect things modern art has produced,” and was displayed in many homes. Poynter (ARA, RA, later knighted) contributed from 1875 until the Society’s end in 1897; he may have assumed his father’s subscription, as the architect and painter Ambrose Poynter was an early member.



Fig 2. William Morris’ library at Kelmscott House after 1888.



Fig 3. Emilio Costantini, copyist, after Botticelli's *Primavera* c.1887
watercolour, 53.3 x 82.6 cm, issued as a chromolithograph by the Arundel Society in 1888
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London E.34–1995.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882) expressed much enthusiasm for the Society's Giotto display at the Crystal Palace in November 1855—drawings, tracings, and wood-engravings from the frescoes in the Arena Chapel, Padua—but he did not subscribe. While membership was beyond the financial means of some of the other young men who formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848, their knowledge of the Society's activities, interest in fresco technique and attraction to Italian art, are well documented. One further example will suffice. William Morris (1834–1896) was a member by 1855, although probably not for long; some of his Arundel chromolithographs were probably acquired as Occasional publications. A photograph from the mid-1890s by an unidentified photographer—showing Botticelli's *Primavera* in the library at Kelmscott House (figures 2 and 3)—demonstrates the chromolithographs in a domestic sphere.² Morris probably made use of this and other reproductions when, in the late 1890s, he and Edward Burne-Jones (1833–1898) designed a tapestry after the Botticelli. Indeed they, and other practitioners associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement, seem to have been inspired by the chromolithographic palette and by a certain “hardness” intrinsic to the print technique.

² This may be one of the photographs used by Edmund H. New in the production of drawings after Morris's homes or one of those taken by Emery Walker after Morris's death (Victorian and Albert Museum, London, V&A: M2-1973).

USA

The activities of the Arundel Society's American agents, like others further afield, may be gleaned through newspapers, reports and several archival sources. Through the published materials, and their news of the Society's activities, we also gauge a growing enthusiasm for "the Primitives" and art more generally. The earliest mentions were in December 1849, an outline of the Society and its functions, in *Bulletin of the American Art-Union*. The first overseas agent, Boston's William H. Dennet, in partnership with James Munroe, circulated prints from 1855. In *Stranger's Guide in the City of Boston*, published by Andrews & Co in 1848, James Munroe & Co is described as occupying a stand that has been used "for the Book business for more than fifty years" and as having "an extensive trade as publishers, booksellers and importers" (16). They produced classical works and supplied "Sabbath Schools, Parish and District Libraries, and also Book-Clubs, and Societies in general".

The art journal *The Crayon*, published in New York by William Stillman (1828–1901) and John Durand (1822–1908) between 1855 and 1861, connects Ruskin, Pre-Raphaelite artists and their American compatriots, as well as containing several early references to the Arundel Society. Through the publication, devoted to the "graphic arts and the literature related to them", we trace the earliest spread of Ruskinian tenets in America. Stillman, who much admired Ruskin's treatise *Modern Painters*, travelled to England in early 1850 where he made the author's acquaintance and met J. M. W. Turner. He also fell under the influence of Rossetti and John Everett Millais to such an extent that he was known as "the American Pre-Raphaelite". As well as Ruskin's writings, Stillman and Durand published poems by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the works of Henry James, amongst others. They employed William Michael Rossetti (1829–1919), as foreign correspondent from April 1855 until January 1857, and writers such as F. G. Stephens (1827–1907) and Charles Eliot Norton (1827–1908).

In January 1855 *The Crayon* reprinted a review of Ruskin's "Life of Giotto" from the *Athenaeum*; "Notice of Giotto and his works in Padua" was subsequently run over two issues in July and August. In November the same year, William Michael notes the Society's display at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, which he admired, albeit with less enthusiasm than his brother Dante Gabriel (*Crayon* 2.22:341). A series of advertisements in the August, October and December issues alerted readers to the Arena Chapel wood engravings (\$5.50 per annum), and past issues available from Dennet in Boston:

This society is one of the best mediums extant for diffusing a knowledge of Art by the publication of such works as illustrate its progress in the old world. It is an institution composed of members who subscribe annually the sum of one guinea each, the proceeds of which subscription are devoted to the publication of engravings from "certain works of Art, as are not sufficiently popular in character to induce any private publisher to risk the expense of engraving." The plan of the institution is an Art-Union, carried on with little expense for officers, &c, and free from any objectionable features: it appeals to those who love Art for its own sake, and to those who are interested in the study of its history; to both classes its publications are especially valuable. So far the society has met with encouragement, numbering among its members in England, the first men of that Country. We give below a list of its publications thus far, and, having the works of two years in our possession, we should be happy to show them to any persons who would like to subscribe. (Page and Neal, *Crayon* 2:8:120–121)

Further descriptions of the Crystal Palace displays and of a lecture given by architect and art historian Matthew Digby Wyatt (1820–1877)—on the history, methods and production of ancient ivories—followed in the November and December 1855 issues, quoting material from the *Athenaeum* and the *London Observer*. William Michael’s 1886 correspondence discussed the next instalments of the Arena Chapel engravings, as well as Wyatt’s volume on the ivories (*Crayon* 3:1:24 and 3:8:246). An article published in May 1858 bemoaned the American Government’s lack of commitment to art, the dismal quality and vast expense of the engravings included in government publications. Within these “Gleanings and Items” was a notice clipped from a July 1857 issue of the *Boston Courier* describing speeches by the archaeologist-politician A. H. Layard (1817–1894) and Ruskin on the state of frescoes in Italy delivered at the Special General Meeting in London. The Society’s publications, wrote “F”, should be in every art collection, and “certainly in our public libraries, which are too scantily supplied with historical illustrations of Art” (*Crayon* 5:5:150). A long article in October 1858, reprinting material from the *London Times*, was more emphatic: “No lover of art, or what is better, no student of art, should hold back from subscribing to the best public effort of the day for diffusing a knowledge of rare and instructive works of art” (“Foreign Correspondence”, *Crayon* 5:10:294–295). Thus by the time a second American agent, New York bookseller John McClure, began to circulate prints during the 1860s, the art public on the East Coast was well primed.

The archives of the Boston firm of Doll and Richards offer the best evidence of the operations of the American agents. The firm seems to have been appointed agents in the late 1870s, remaining until the Society’s close in 1897 and operating parallel to those in New York. Doll and Richards is best known for promoting the Barbizon School and works of their American counterparts, and as Boston agent for landscape painter Winslow Homer (Treadway 12–14). Its clientele was mostly from the social register: the gallery influenced the taste and collecting habits of Bostonians in the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s and is described in *King’s Handbook* of 1891 as being to Boston as “Goupil is to New York or Haseltine to Philadelphia”.



Fig 4. N. L. Stebbins, Doll and Richards Gallery at 71 Newbury St, Boston, after 1908 showing a framed set of the Ghent altarpiece chromolithographs (1868–1871) at centre Doll & Richards gallery records, 1863–1978. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Joseph Dudley Richards had early worked for the picture house of John P. Sowle and, when the latter found himself in debt, Richards acquired part of his business. As a partnership between Charles E. Hendrickson, Eutyclus Adam Doll and Richards, it ran as a framing shop and art gallery from 1866. The gallery was renamed Doll and Richards after Hendrickson’s retirement and retained the name after the death of Doll. From its early days, the gallery sold engravings and lithographs, and, occasionally, produced and published prints. In 1878 Doll and Richards moved to Parks Street, and took over Warren House which was remodelled with up-to-date facilities. Printed stationery items at this time announced the gallery as agents to the Arundel Society. A

ledger from the period 1885–97 records details of the subscribers: names, addresses and subscription dates for members, with notes about notification and delivery of the prints. In the mid-1880s the gallery had between 35 and 40 subscribers, many of whom retained their memberships for between five and twelve years. When cross-referenced against the Society's published lists, it is clear that a large number of prints circulated in Boston.³

Several of the Arundel Society's members were key players in Boston, members of the Athenaeum, and later donors and trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA). George Washington Wales, who joined the Society in 1871, gave his collection to the museum on the condition that the museum maintained his subscription. Martin Brimmer—philanthropist, legislator, collector and the first president of the MFA—subscribed from 1878 until 1894. The art critic and philanthropist Charles C. Perkins seems to have maintained a subscription from 1860; he was made an honorary member for his contribution, with Stephen Thompson, to *Sepulchral Monuments in Italy; Mediæval and Renaissance*, compiling G. E. Street's notes for publication after his death in 1882. Perkins had spent extended periods in Europe in his early life—his early work was inspired by Rio—and was influential in bringing South Kensington methods to the United States; he was honorary director of the Museum from 1876 until his death. Charles Eliot Norton, another Athenaeum trustee, also subscribed; the wife of his



Fig 5. Thomas E Marr, *Art Room, looking east* 1902 silver gelatin print

Purchase Fine Arts Fund 1902 Boston Athenaeum: showing framed Arundel Society chromolithographs, including Fra Bartolommeo's *The Annunciation*, hanging at far right.

cousin—the historian, educator, philanthropist, MFA trustee Samuel Eliot—is also listed as member in the 1880s. Mrs Thorndike Perkins, a great granddaughter of the painter John Singleton Copley and whose husband, Augustus Thorndike Perkins, wrote a memoir of Copley, was a member of the Society in the 1880s. Clearly the prints remained attractive to collectors: in December 1887 a Mr Henry Hume of Albany, New York, wrote requesting a complete set of the Society's publications. The chromolithographs, moreover, remained on display at Doll and Richards into the twentieth century as we see in several photographs of the interiors at Newbury Street (figure 4).

³ John B. Pearse of Roxbury, for example, was a chemist who worked for iron or steel works in Pennsylvania and Boston. His large library covered a range of subjects, including English, French, German and American prints, and his collection of Arundel publications was described in 1922 as "the most extensive series of the finely printed colored and illuminated plates ever offered at public sale in America", covering from 1856 to 1897 and "including no less than 137 different subjects" (Pearse).



Fig 6. Storch & Kramer, lithographic firm after a copy of Fra Bartolommeo's *The Annunciation*, by Cesari Mariannecci lithograph, 30.4 x 56.8 cm London: Arundel Society 1866

Felix Man Collection National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

In North America the situation with extant collections is remarkably variable. Boston Athenaeum was the earliest and most consistent of the institutional collecting subscribers, and closely tied to the development of the Museum of Fine Arts (figures 5 and 6). One of the first cultural institutions in the United States, the Athenaeum was formed by amalgamation of the membership library and reading room, and, from the beginning, showed a commitment to art, believing that an aesthetically pleasing environment was conducive to intellectual endeavours. A Fine Art Committee was set up in 1826, annual exhibitions commenced the following year, with profits applied to acquisitions. Like other early museum collections, fear of fakes and a desire to act economically meant that copies and reproductive works were acquired: the watercolours after Old Master paintings given by Thomas Dowse, Arundel Society chromolithographs and Braun photographs. The Athenaeum subscribed as early as 1855, and the chromolithographs were often on display. In the 1860s, however, when the institution turned away from aesthetic interests, its sculpture space was converted to a library. Many of those involved in the Athenaeum were actively working towards the establishment of an art museum and, with the founding of the Museum of Fine Arts in 1870, the function of the earlier institution changed fundamentally. In July 1876, for the opening, much of the Athenaeum's collection, including 51 Arundel prints, were displayed at the MFA; a further 30 chromolithographs were deposited in 1882. By 1885 they and the Braun photographs were the subject of dispute, and in 1886 the chromolithographs and many of the photographic prints were returned to the Athenaeum building on Beacon Street (Hirayama 146, 157).

Australia

As with the United States, the first references to the Arundel Society in Australian newspapers are syndicated. In a February 1856 issue of the *Sydney Morning Herald* we find discussions of the London art world, the affairs of the Royal Academy and Wyatt's well-received lecture on ivories, all republished from the *Illustrated London News* of November the previous year. In the Melbourne *Argus* in October 1857, via the London correspondent for *The New York Tribune*, we hear of the "remarkable researches" of Layard in Italy during the past two years:

Taking Vasari as his guide, he set off upon the hunt for the lost frescoes of Giotto and painters of the Pre-Raphaelite period, and now brings back seven hundred tracings of works, the existence of which has been hitherto unknown. Some of these will shortly be published by the Arundel Society ("Mr Bayard Taylor in London", 6)

The first Australian agent was R. Edmond Chester Waters (1828–1898). As representative for the Colony of Victoria, Waters worked with the founding Trustees of the Public Library and was influential, albeit at a distance, in soliciting subscribers in Melbourne and further afield (Arundel Society, *General Rules* 20). After Waters, the Melbourne Public Library's Augustus Tulk (1810–1873) promoted the Society's publications from 1864. Tulk died in office, after which time the role of agent passed to Samuel Mullen (1828–1890)—variously referred to as the agent in Melbourne or the agent for Australia. These three Australian representatives form a rough schema of the modes of circulation over the Society's lifetime. Waters' status gave him important connections in aristocratic circles. Tulk's period as agent corresponds with a second phase when the prints connected with scholars and new middle-class professionals, while Mullen's role, after 1874, represents a more commercial relationship

The Argus continued to devote column-space to the Arundel Society's activities in the 1860s and 1870s, particularly in the context of the Melbourne Public Library, and the subsequent efforts of its Trustees to develop an Art Gallery. On the other hand, the broader functions of the Melbourne agent, Waters, seem to have attracted little attention. A series of articles written by James Smith (1820–1910)—who joined the *Argus* as leader-writer, theatre, literature and art critic in 1856, and continued to write for it and several other papers for the next five decades—published between October 1868 and March 1869, provide the most extensive understanding of the role of the Society's prints in the early artistic life of the colony. While Smith and others sustained this interest after the 1870s, noting the release of new publications, as well as various displays in Melbourne and elsewhere, it is the auction notices that provide the best insights into circulating patterns.

After the success of the opening of the Melbourne Public Library in 1856, the next logical step was an art gallery. Two thousand pounds was voted by Parliament for the purchase of works of art, and in May 1859 the trustees met to decide how to approach the task. Waters, working from London, organised the first purchases for the Melbourne Museum: he had been told that it was not the intention to buy pictures or copies, however excellent or cheap, and that he should confine his purchases to photographs and casts, medals, coins and gems, and other "miscellaneous objects" (Cox 8). In a letter of October 1860 Waters wrote proposing to ask Layard to recommend "Lycian and Assyrian bas reliefs"; he also advised having secured a complete set of the fictile ivory carvings produced by the Arundel Society, as well as having placed orders for the print publications (quoted Galbally 36–37 and Cox 10). Many of these were evidently on display when the museum of art opened in May 1861: on the ground floor of the south wing of the Library, casts of the Elgin marbles, 70 antique statues, 63 busts and a

“quantity of other art exhibits” were on show.

Subsequently a Fine Arts Commission was established in 1863 to report on the feasibility of a National Gallery for the Colony of Victoria. The judge and Melbourne Public Library trustee Sir Redmond Barry, politician and banker Sir George Verdon,⁴ sculptor Charles Summers and journalist James Smith were part of the eleven-strong committee that produced favourable recommendations:

The selection should proceed on an organised system, capable of extension in various directions ... [to illustrate] those subjects immediately required for instruction in drawing, and that such copies as may be deemed necessary from time to time. A two-fold object would thus be accomplished; one, in the acquisition of choice works of contemporary artists, for the pleasure, improvement variety and contrast which they afford; another [i.e. the copies] in the illustration of the History of Art. (*Second Progress Report of the Commission on the Fine Arts*).

With the completion of a north wing for the Library in December 1864, the sculpture collection was rearranged on the ground floor. A picture gallery on the first floor, in a space erected for the 1866 Intercolonial Exhibition and intended as temporary, was also used for the growing collections. The Gallery was formally established by the *Library, Museum and National Gallery Act* in 1869.

⁴ Verdon is listed as a subscriber in 1879 and 1883, and his collection of 18 prints was sold in June 1891; see *Catalogue of the Most Beautiful and Costly Art Furniture, Marble Statuary, Real Bronzes, Art Treasures, Oil Paintings, Water-Colour Drawings, Fine Old Engravings etc. Collected by Sir George Verdon, KCMC* ... Melbourne: Gemmell, Tuckett, 1891, 27–30 at 29; see Inglis 66–69, at 69 (note 14)



Fig 7 ABCDEF.

Storch & Kramer, lithographic firm

after copies of frescoes in the Cappella Brancacci, Santa Maria del Carmine, at Florence by Cesari
MariannecciFillipino Lippi's *The fall* and Masaccio's *The expulsion*

lithographs, 28 x 10.2 cm (each) London: Arundel Society 1861

Fillipino Lippi's *St Peter in prison visited by St Paul* and *St Peter delivered from prison*

lithographs, 28 x 10.6 cm (each)

Head from *St Peter in prison visited by St Paul* lithograph, 36.2 x 25.4 cm

London: Arundel Society 1862

Masaccio and Lippi's *St Peter and St Paul raising the king's son* and *The homage to St Peter*

lithograph, 36.4 x 72.8 cm London: Arundel Society 1863

Felix Man Collection National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Some chromolithographs seem to have been admitted to the Public Library displays as early as 1861. The *Argus* for 27 May 1867 contains a direct reference to several Florentine and Bolognese subjects—probably the Brancacci Chapel prints (cf figure 7) and Francia's *The Burial of Cecilia* from San Giacomo Maggiore in Bologna. The galleries had reopened at this time with some “very striking alterations and improvements”, reflecting “great credit on Mr Tulk” (“Victorian Gallery” 2). The *Argus*' most extensive discussion is part of a series on the Public Library series, which described the arrangement, classification and contents of the collection, as well as the works on display. The sixth in the series, from December 1868, was devoted to the “vexed issue of copies”. After bemoaning the quality of the art collection, the paucity of its display spaces, and the amounts paid for poor copies, the writer went on to comment: “It is painfully evident to anyone who enters the picture-gallery at present, that the

taste of our people, if such a thing exists at all, is still very little developed". *Argus* readers were reminded of the need to carefully select artists:

This is so well known at present in the art-circles of Europe, that no connoisseur would think of employing even a first-class painter to copy outside the range of works for which he is suited! If only proper care be taken in the selection of the artist, we may have copies of the most celebrated works in existence which would be second only to the originals, and would infinitely surpass, not alone for teaching purposes, but for the elevation of the taste of the multitude, the best of the modern productions which our gallery contains. (Smith, "Public Library VI" 5)



Fig 8. Etienne Isidore Hangard-Maugé, lithographer
after copies of Hubert and Jan van Eyck's *Ghent altarpiece* by Christian Schultz
20 lithographs, 120.9 x 154.3 x 8.3 cm (framed, open)
London: Arundel Society 1868–71
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

1869 and 1870 saw further activity. Arundel chromos are described, in March 1869, on display in two glass cases at the centre of the hall (Smith, "Public Library IX" 7). In February 1870 it was announced that 100 works will be hung in the room facing Latrobe Street, previously occupied by the Technological Commission, while in April 1870 the *Argus* writer devotes a whole article to a single work, the Society's much-admired *Adoration of the Lamb*: 20 prints after the multi-panelled altarpiece by the van Eycks were issued over four years from 1868 (figure 8). Smith hints at the complexities of obtaining permissions to copy the altarpiece—only the third time the canons of St Bavon have granted permission—significant factors being, apparently, the copyist Schultz's Platt-Deutsch, his status as a native of

Mecklenburgh, and his previous copies of Memling's Bruges altarpiece, *Adoration of the Magi*, issued in 1865 (Chromolithographs 5 and Adoration of the Lamb 6). Clearly by this time there also were a good number of prints and medium-sized collections in Australian private hands: the chromolithographs were starting to appear on the secondary market and to be lent for exhibitions.⁵

Following Tulk's death, Eugene von Guérard (1811–1901), as Curator and Master of the School of Painting at the National Gallery, was the custodian of the Public Library chromolithographs for more than a decade. Tulk and von Guérard were well known to each other: the artist had tutored Tulk's son in London, and it was on von Guérard's recommendation that Tulk, seeking a warmer climate for health reasons, migrated to Australia in July 1854. In von Guérard's reports to the Trustees—from 1870 until his retirement in late 1881 and departure for Europe in January 1882—we can track the various receipts, movements, framing and display of the Arundel Society collection. In one report, from late 1876 or early 1877, he writes:

Having had all of the chromos of the Arundel Society of the last four or five years framed, I arranged all of those pictures in chronological order, from Giotto down to the followers of Rafael, the Italian schools, and in the same way those of the German and Flemish schools, forming a very interesting and instructive medium in knowledge of the progress and history of art. Descriptive tickets have to be printed for all the new chromos. (Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 1074)



Fig 9. Arundel Society advertisement for the Memling altarpiece 1876.

The National Gallery's School of Art had opened in 1867. The students were regularly set to copy Arundel Society material and other parts of the collection. Frederick McCubbin (1855–1917), writing some forty years later, recalled paying a visit to his old tutor at the Carlton School of Design: Thomas Clark, recently appointed Master of Drawings at the National Gallery. As he wandered round, McCubbin saw students of all ages, including 'a good number of middle-aged men,' drawing the statuary, another group "copying one or two of the Arundel Society lithographs of Old Masters" and four young men "engaged copying an enamel picture". From this, he concluded, the School was "no end of a place to study" (70).⁶ No doubt many previous and subsequent students agreed. The Trustees of the Melbourne Public Library continued to acquire reproductive prints, photographs and the Society's chromolithographs—as variously noted in the newspapers in the 1870s and 1880s—and remained a subscriber until the end in 1897. Consequently National

⁵ At various times the Society's final agent in Melbourne, Mullen, lent works for exhibition including in 1886 for the Juvenile and Industrial Exhibition in Bendigo. In Victoria, other nineteenth-century subscribers included St Patrick's College, East Melbourne and Hawthorn Church, both of which are listed in 1879 and 1883, and therefore would have received at least 55 prints; the former may have been destroyed but the latter have not been traced. The physician and poet Dr Patrick Moloney—who was probably a member for a brief period, being listed for 1881 and 1883 only—had a collection, sold at auction before his departure for Europe in 1898.

⁶ Clark served as the drawing master from 1870 until 1876; McCubbin describes the School as being opened "about a year" so, if his memory serves him correctly, this would have been in 1871 or 1872.

Gallery of Victoria holdings are the largest in Australia, bringing together those obtained via Melbourne Public Library subscription with a smaller number of items previously held by the Parliamentary Library.

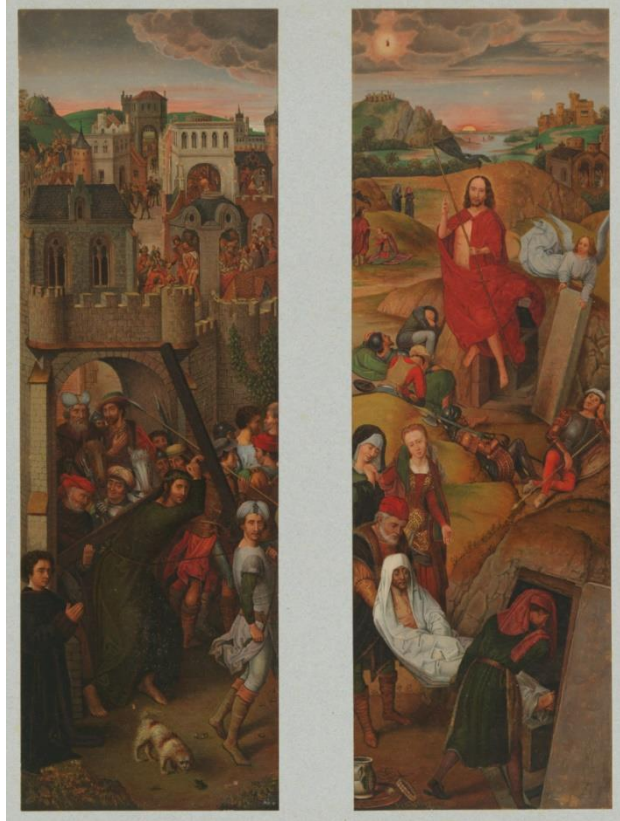


Fig 10 left-to-right ABCDE. Etienne Isidore Hangard-Maugé, lithographer
after a copy of Hans Memling's altarpiece by
Christian Schultz *The crucifixion*
lithograph, 56.3 x 40.8 cm London: Arundel Society
1876
*Angel Gabriel and The Virgin Annunciate and The
entombment and Resurrection*
lithographs, 56 x 17.6–17.9 cm (each) London:
Arundel Society 1877
Felix Man Collection, National Gallery of Australia,
Canberra.

There are comparatively few collections of Arundel Society material elsewhere in Australia. In Sydney and broader N.S.W. the main nineteenth-century collections in Sydney were those of the politician-merchant Sir Saul Samuel and the politician-pastoralist Sir Patrick Jennings.⁷ The Art Gallery of NSW did not acquire the Society's publications until the twentieth century: ten prints were purchased in 1903 which, as curator Kay Vernon points out, indicated a shift in the original decision not to buy reproductions of Old Masters. More prints were donated to the Sydney gallery by newspaperman Sir James Fairfax in the teens. These, and other reproductive prints, were disbursed in the 1950s and 1960s, considered of educational use only. A handful of references to Arundel Society works appear in Perth, Brisbane and Hobart,⁸ and good number of prints have made their way into religious institutions throughout the country. Those shown in a photograph dated c.1911 in the House of Grace at Williams in Bunbury, Western Australia, may be the Memling *Crucifixion* from Lübeck in their special frame (cf figures 9 and 10) but their provenance and current location is uncertain. In Melbourne, Canon Ernest Selwyn Hughes and Mrs Isabel Hughes acquired a collection of Arundel prints in Europe in 1913; some were later sold, given to educational or religious entities and, subsequently, the collection expanded.⁹ In 1930 Christ Church, Darwin, received three chromolithographs, a gift of unnamed English donors, but their whereabouts today is also unknown. The set of van Eyck altarpiece in St Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide, was given by the friends of the Cathedral in memory of Marion Dora Finnis, first wife of Canon Finnis.

⁷ Samuel's prints—he is not listed as a member so we assume he acquired some occasional publications—were dispersed at a Harris and Ackman auction in 1880, at the time of his appointment as Agent-General for New South Wales in London. Jennings, on the other hand, seems to have subscribed in the 1870s and is listed in 1883; his collection, shown at Sydney's Metropolitan Intercolonial Exhibition in April 1875, was auctioned in 1896.

⁸ Two of the head outlines, issued as line engravings, were lent by the Catholic priest and medical man Martin Griver to the Loan Exhibition in Perth in 1870. The Honourable Mr Littleton provided Raphael's *St Peter delivered in prison*, from the Vatican frescoes, and a second chromolithograph for the National Society's Exhibition of 1877 in Brisbane. In Hobart in the 1880s there are some tantalising references to prints being included, and winning prizes, in the Tasmanian Juvenile and Industrial Exhibition—we can only assume some intervention, and that the prizes were awarded for copying, mounting or framing the "Arundel Society picture" by a Mrs Hugill of Richmond.

Although the Adelaide firm Wigg & Sons sold a range of reproductive prints its stock did not, apparently, include the Society's publications. Some prints were sold by Theodore Bruce in September 1931 but these have not been identified. Adelaide newspaper sources indicate an awareness of related issues, recording, for example, the death of George Scharf, Director of London's National Portrait Gallery and author of the publication on the Wilton diptych. Much later, in 1946, a Dr Edgar Brown took his collection of Baxter and Arundel prints to auction, but in Melbourne.

⁹ Some of the works were sold at auction in 1942 and 1943, and others were subsequently exhibited at Joshua McClelland's print gallery in Collins Street in 1947 and 1949. The remaining collection was then split. Some were given to St Peter's Church in Eastern Hill, Melbourne, and transferred in the 1960s to Trinity College at the University of Melbourne; the Hughes' van Eyck altarpiece, which probably came to St Peter's in the mid-1940s, remains on display today. Approximately 20 of the Hughes' prints were given to St Martin's, Hawksburn; the collection was augmented by a further 15 given by Hughes' brother Dr Wilfred Kent Hughes in 1924. In the 1970s Father Nigel Wright worked to expand the holdings; prints were located in both Western Australia and the Middle East, and others were also subsequently donated, bringing the total to 39 (Tyler; see also Nicholls 84–87).

New Zealand

After the Melbourne Public Library, the largest colonial collections of Arundel Society material are those amassed by colonial administrator Sir George Grey (1812–1898) and businessman-philanthropist James Mackelvie (1824–1885), and a third group now at the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch. Neither Grey or Mackelvie seems to have subscribed and may have sourced their chromolithographs through the Arundel Society's agent: although the current location of prints is not known their dates are consistent with Mackelvie's years in Auckland (1865–71), Grey's second period as Governor (1861–68) and the Arundel Society's agent for New Zealand.

The subscribers to the Arundel Society in Auckland, will receive copies of the [Pinturicchio's *Annunciation* at Spello and scenes from the Brancacci Chapel frescoes, including several full-sized details for scale¹⁰] on the arrival of the "African", on board which ship they have been placed. Mr Varty, the New Zealand agent for the Society, will distribute them on their arrival. This shows that no time has been lost in forwarding them to New Zealand. (*Daily Southern Cross* 18:1579: 4)

This reference to John Varty, a stationer and bookseller who worked from the Canada Buildings in Queen Street, Auckland, ran at the end of an article reprinted from the London *Saturday Review* in which the writer marvelled at the number of prints issued (seven colour images on three sheets) and the Society's ability to provide such return on an investment of a single guinea. Varty may have trained as a lithographer—apart from producing "every description of lithographic printing", he published maps and operated a circulating library, as well as advertising for repairs of pianofortes and harmoniums—but seems to have remained an active agent only a short time: he is listed by the Society in 1865 but not in 1878 and, apart from some enthusiastic advertisements about expansions to his "lithographic plan and machinery" during 1863, there is no evidence of any further activities for the Society (*Daily Southern Cross* 1).

¹⁰ As well as *The fall*, *The expulsion* and scenes from St Peter's life (rf figure 7), the Brancacci Chapel series included: *The tribute money* after Masaccio with two full-sized heads from the principal group (issued in 1861); Masolino's *St Peter preaching* with Masaccio's *St Peter baptising* (1861); Masolino's *St Peter and St John healing the cripple* and *St Peter raising Tabitha*, again with the saint's head for scale (1862); the Masaccio / Lippi scenes *St Peter and St Paul raising the king's son* and *The homage to St Peter* with head (1863); and Masaccio's *St Peter and St John healing the sick by their shadows* and *St Peter and St John given alms* with another detail (1863); and, finally, *St Peter and St Paul before Nero* and the *Martyrdom of St Peter* given to Lippi (1868).



Fig 11. Mackelvie Annexe, Auckland Art Gallery, 1895, showing Arundel Society lithographs with Daniel Maclise's *The Spirit of Justice* 1850
E H McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki,
from an original first published in *New Zealand Graphic*, 13 July 1895,
p.30



Fig 12. Eduard Kaiser after Giorgione's *Virgin and Child between St Liberale and St Francis* (*The Castelfranco altarpiece*)
watercolour, 67 x 48.5 cm, issued as a chromolithograph by the Arundel Society
in 1879

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E.104-1995

In 1888, the year the Auckland Free Library and Art Gallery opened, Arundel Society chromolithographs are recorded in *The Auckland Star* and within the *Handbook to the Auckland Art Gallery and Mackelvie Collection*, prepared by Grey's Secretary and late Secretary to the Auckland Society of Art, C. D. Whitcombe. The August 1888 article notes that the prints, now in Municipal buildings awaiting display, will be hung "on the dado beneath the pictures" (*Auckland Star* 5). All the works listed in the handbook—records of some the "finest specimens of art ever produced", which, because of the decay of the originals, and the limited number of the "chromo-facsimiles" issued, their "value and importance is increasing"—are those issued in the late 1850s and 1860s, apart from that after *The Madonna with the violet* now given to Stephen Lochner, then "Meister Wilhelm" of Köln, from 1873 (90). By 1892, in preparation for the opening of the Mackelvie annexe at the Auckland Art Gallery, the number of chromolithographs—now newly reframed in "stained kauri frames with rewarewa linings, and frosted gold mountings ... all illustrative of local industry"—is variously described as 50 and 60 or as many as 100 (*New Zealand Herald*, 4). Those shown in a 1895 photograph include later prints such as those after Raphael's *The poets of Mount Parnassus* in the Stanza

della Segnatura, Vatican, and Giorgione's *Virgin and Child between St Liberale and St Francis* (*The Castelfranco altarpiece*) issued in 1873 and 1879 respectively (figures 11 and 12). The Arundel Society chromolithographs continued to be displayed until at least the 1930s.¹¹

The prints within the Canterbury Museum collection are the result of the subscription held by the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury from 1879 until 1883. The minutes of the Institute's first meeting, on 7 March 1878, record its decision to obtain the Society's principal publications to encourage art and its spread of knowledge within the district. The works were displayed and formed the subject of the Institute's *conversazione*, held in the old Provincial Council Chambers in March 1879, as well as several illustrated lectures delivered by geologist Sir Julius von Haast (1824–1887), the Institute's founder and president, and first director of the Canterbury Museum. In the same month a long article in Christchurch's *The Star* reported on the Institute's increased membership—noting that the Arundel Society's publications had been “eagerly welcomed” into “not a few of the English Museums and Galleries”, and that two rooms in the Melbourne Picture Gallery had been specially set apart for them—and by declaring there was no doubt the prints would aid “the aesthetic education of the rising generation” (4). Ninety-four prints were donated to the Museum in 1884 and are recorded, the following year, on display in alongside ethnological specimens from New Guinea, Australia, Fiji, and Samoa, as well as Africa and America, casts of ivory carvings, Japanese objects and specimens of Egyptian papyri, the type of rich museum display typical of the period (*Mosley's Illustrated Guide to Christchurch and Neighbourhood* 76).

Conclusion

I immediately joined [the Arundel Society], as one of the first subscribers, perhaps not many of whom are still remaining to give it their support. As it was just then the time that I was occupied with my *History of the art of painting*, I welcomed these researches into early Italian and German art as a most opportune help and encouragement, and not only has the beautiful series of chromo-lithographs given the greatest pleasure to their subscribers, but to the numerous individuals and societies on whom they have been bestowed, when their numbers outgrew the portfolios of the possessors. Into many a house must they have brought refined and devotional conceptions of art, and have replaced upon the walls the unworthy productions of a lower grade. (Twining 98).

Reasons for joining the Arundel Society were many and varied. Although there are tantalisingly few specific instances recorded in diaries or letters, it is clear that key individuals were influential in encouraging family members, friends and associates to join the Society. The collections developed by some of the first members, a handful of which are extant today, reveal a breadth of intentions and range of uses, from the period of their formation until now. Many prints were traded through the secondary market and have, in turn, also made their way into church or museum collections. Tracing connections between the individuals and institutions reveals a range of social, artistic, and intellectual networks. Many of the original institutional subscribers acquired the Society's publications in their earliest collecting phase, before acquisition policies were set or strategies articulated: where the museums retain their holdings, these are of particular interest in the light of subsequent collection development.

¹¹ Information about the Auckland holdings has been enhanced and updated by information kindly provided by Dr Sophie Matthiesson of the Auckland Art Gallery.

While works have been dispersed or transferred between institutions, and those acquired for teaching collections especially show their history of heavy use, others remain dormant, often in the same albums of portfolios as when acquired. A number of chromolithographs are reproduced on collection websites, carefully catalogued and accompanied by high-quality images.

In the 1860s the Society restricted its full membership to 3000 so as not to compromise the quality of its lithographs. From 1864, when institutions were included among the privileged 500 “First Subscribers”, many museums, libraries and educational institutions took up subscriptions; many of these new entities no doubt perceived this as a prudent investment, a way of obtaining a good number of attractive, scholarly and “sanctioned” objects for a relatively small amount of money. Just as provincial and colonial museums took their cues from Ruskin and the South Kensington Museum in London, the Melbourne Public Library’s case for collecting was, in turn, influential further afield. A letter published in October 1884 in the *West Australian*, for example, advocates the establishment of a Public Library, Industrial Museum, and Art Gallery for Perth. Collections, it is noted, may be developed for a moderate outlay:

witness, for instance, the splendid casts of the statuary in their keeping furnished by the authorities of the British Museum, and the magnificent copies from the Old Masters prepared with such loving care by the artists who work for the Arundel Society. We trust the Government and Legislature may not remain so wholly engrossed with their usual routine work as to neglect much longer to minister to the educational wants of the people. (*West Australian* 3)

The Trustees of the Melbourne Public Library were so determined copies, reproductive prints and casts were essential to the education and development of good taste in the colonies, that they approached the Arundel Society in 1869 for assistance in commissioning copies for the collection. The Council replied, via secretary Frederick W. Maynard, regretfully and in the negative, stating they had difficulty fulfilling their own requirements (“The Public Gallery of Art” 1). The Library’s casts after classical sculpture have long since been dispersed¹²—indeed the Society’s fictile ivories seem to have been withdrawn as early as 1865—and we may imagine what other “curiosities” might have joined the collection if Arundel copyists Cesari Mariannecci, Christian Schultz and others had not been fully occupied by their duties.

Perhaps Melbourne’s task was achieved rather too successfully. Following generations seem anxious to clear out the evidence of the conscientious, even obsessive, mimicry of past creation. While earnestly amassing reproductions, the point of stimulating new works of art seems to have been lost. By examining intellectual networks, the dissemination of knowledge about “the Primitives” from Britain to its colonies and to the United States, we gain insights into expectations of art and ideas about taste at a time when art history was a nascent discipline. What seems clear now, at a distance, is the importance of the circulation and collecting of Arundel Society and other reproductive prints in a period when art criticism and

¹² Some were damaged while in use in the art school; in 1900 a large number were lent to the Working Men’s College (RMIT) and destroyed in the 1960s; others (including the fictile *ivories*) were lent to the Melbourne Exhibition Building, becoming part of the museum housed in the aquarium, and many were subsequently destroyed in the 1953 fire; the remaining works were sold, auctioned or given to the galleries or Town Council in Alexandra, Bendigo, Castlemaine, Geelong, Mildura, Warrnambool and other galleries in the 1940s (Galbally 46–47).

art education were increasingly dominated by visual material rather than words. The *quaestio vexata* of copies in art remains.

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